



Lewis County Public Health & Social Services

News Release

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Imposter posing as Animal Shelter employee

Chehalis, WA – The Lewis County Animal Shelter has received reports from community members that an unknown citizen is going onto private property, maneuvering through closed gates, claiming to be with the Animal Shelter, and saying they are there to “pick up the stray animal and transport to the shelter.” Shelter manager Jennifer Teitzel said this person is NOT affiliated with Lewis County or the shelter in any way and it would be against the law to give them a stray animal.

Under state law, there are only three places in Lewis County to legally take a stray animal: a veterinarian’s clinic, the Lewis County Animal Shelter, or to law enforcement. If you have lost your pet, contact the shelter to file a report and provide information on the missing pet. If you have found a lost pet, please bring it to the shelter to be scanned for a microchip. Teitzel advises that if you are posting on Facebook, be careful to not disclose private information such as address or other identifying comments which could invite someone to show up and falsely claim to be associated with the shelter.

Teitzel said if shelter staff go into the community in response to reports of stray or injured animals, or for animal code enforcement investigation, they do not go onto private property without prior notification to and permission from the property owner. She offers the following ways to ensure someone contacting you is a county shelter employee:

- All shelter employees carry county-issued photo identification. They are not offended if someone asks for identification if it is not visible.
- All shelter employees drive vehicles clearly marked as belonging to Lewis County.
- All shelter employees follow Lewis County’s written property entry policies that require preapproval from the property owner.

Teitzel cautions that if you see someone you don’t know on your property who is not in a marked county vehicle, call for law enforcement rather than approach them if you are at all uncomfortable.

Once the shelter receives an animal, every attempt is made to find its owner prior to putting the animal up for adoption. Having your pets micro-chipped is the best way to make sure they go back to their

correct homes. Teitzel said the shelter does not euthanize due to overcrowding or extended stay without being adopted. Euthanization only happens by court order or when humanely necessary due to extent of injuries. She said this happens to fewer than 10 percent of the more than 1,300 animals that come through the shelter each year. Most of the animals that have to be euthanized have been struck by a vehicle.

Anyone with concerns, or who wants more information, may contact Jennifer Teitzel at Lewis County Animal Shelter, 360-740-1290 or email jennifer.teitzel@lewiscountywa.gov

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